

## Vermont State Board of Education Monthly Report – March 2009

The State Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting on March 17th in Montpelier.

**Board Elects Officers** – Officers were elected by the Board at its March 17 meeting. Tom James of Essex was re-elected Board chair, and Ruth Stokes of Williston was re-elected vice-chair. A retired IBM executive, James has served as a member of the Essex Planning Commission, the Essex Town School Board, the Essex Town Selectboard and the Essex Rotary. His State Board term will end in 2011. Since 1999, Stokes has been the Executive Director of the Vermont Student Opportunity Scholarship Fund (VTSOS). Previously, she served as a state representative for Williston and Richmond, from 1989 to 1992. In addition, Stokes was a member of the University of Vermont Board of Trustees from 1989 to 1995, serving the last two years as chair. She served as a member of her town's school board from 1975 to 1987, serving the last six years as chair. Stokes has also served on the executive board of the Vermont School Boards Association, and has taught high school science. Her State Board term will end in 2011.

**Board welcomes Three New Members** – Three new members appointed by Governor James Douglas on March 1 participated in their first meeting: John Hall, West Danville; Judith Livingston, Manchester; and Donald Collins, Swanton. State Board of Education members serve six year terms.

**Education Transformation Update** – Deputy Commissioner for Transformation Bill Romond updated the Board on the following areas:

### Education Transformation Policy

Commission: The Policy Commission has met once, and discussed critical areas to cover as the commission moves forward.

Don Collins represents the Board on the commission. Romond noted that there was consistent mention by commission members around teacher licensing, pre-service programs, graduation requirements and the school day and calendar.

November Secondary Conference Follow-up: Follow-up sessions with regional ESAs are currently being held. A common thread at many of the sessions has been schools indicating a need for external coaches to support their work. The Department is also working to understand the applicability of stimulus funds as a potential source of monetary support for transformation work.

Internal Department of Education Work: Romond reported on the work going on inside the department to align its work with the Transformation, explaining the department is engaging in internal think tanks on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Romond anticipates that this work will result in closer collaboration and collegueship within the department.

### Statewide Technology Plan Review:

Peter Drescher, the department's statewide technology coordinator, briefed the Board on the current draft of the Vermont Statewide Technology Plan. The plan serves two purposes: a vision for schools for planning purposes (such as budgeting, professional development and partnerships with community resources), and it is a requirement for schools to comply with E-rate dollars from the federal government. E-rate is a telecommunications reimbursement for schools. In order to receive funds, all schools need to have an approved local technology plan. Drescher outlined the role for the department, the supervisory union and the local school. To review the plan, go to [http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/board/packet\\_archives/packet\\_09\\_0317/item\\_N.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/board/packet_archives/packet_09_0317/item_N.pdf). For more information, contact Peter Drescher ([peter.drescher@state.vt.us](mailto:peter.drescher@state.vt.us)).

***From the Department***

**Adequate Yearly Progress**

**Determinations Released** – The Vermont Department of Education released 2009 school accountability determinations as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA) on March 24. Results are based on the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) assessments given to Vermont public school students in grades three through eight and 11.

A school makes Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by meeting targets set by the state as required by NCLBA. These targets increase every three years with the goal of 100 percent proficiency by 2014. A school that does not make AYP for two consecutive years enters the School Improvement process, which requires schools to take specific actions designed to improve student achievement in the area(s) designated as not making AYP. A school that does not make AYP for four consecutive years enters Corrective Action, and the commissioner of education recommends actions specific to that school to the State Board of Education. If an identified school makes AYP two years in a row, they exit the School Improvement process.

For complete results, visit:

[http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm\\_accountability.html#AYP](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_accountability.html#AYP).

***From the Commissioner:***

**Communication on the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA)** –

As information continues to come into the department regarding the stimulus package (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act - ARRA), it has become clear that the department needs a point person to coordinate efforts and lead the work on this important project. This week Commissioner Vilaseca asked Rae Ann Knopf to take on the role as ARRA coordinator for the department. She will continue most aspects of her position as Assistant Division Director of Student Support, but will also be

primarily focused on the coordination and implementation of these funds.

The Department of Education has built a Web page to better inform the field as information comes in. Visit:

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/recovery\\_act.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/recovery_act.html) for more information.

***From the Department***

**Public Comment Opportunity: Annual State Application Under Part B of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as Amended in 2004 for Federal Fiscal Year 2009** – Each year

states are required to file an application to receive IDEA funds. The application includes assurances that the state has policies and procedures in place to meet the requirements of Part B of IDEA and a description of how funds will be used. It is required that the application be made available to the public for 60 days with a 30-day period when comments will be accepted. Visit: [http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_sped.html#comment](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_sped.html#comment) for more information.

Contact: Karin Edwards, Director of Student Support, at (802) 828-5118 or [karin.edwards@state.vt.us](mailto:karin.edwards@state.vt.us).

**Investigating Complaints of Harassment in School: Who, What, Where and How?** –

This workshop, presented by the Vermont Human Rights Commission and the Department of Education, is designed for school administrators, designated employees and other school staff who may be involved in the investigation of complaints of harassment. The workshop will provide participants with an overview and update of the law, a review of the 2007 model harassment policy, and focus on skills development. For information, contact Jerri Lamson, Vermont Human Rights Commission, 1-800-416-2010x25 or [jerri.lamson@state.vt.us](mailto:jerri.lamson@state.vt.us)

**Nimble Tools Assessment Accommodation Test Delivery System** – High school principals will receive a packet of materials

from the department announcing the availability of *Nimble Tools*, an online assessment accommodations test-delivery system that will be available for use by Grade 11 students during the May 2009 administration of the NECAP Science Assessment. Working in collaboration with the Vermont, New Hampshire and Rhode Island Departments of Education, *Nimble Tools* was awarded a Federal Enhanced Assessment Grant to develop a web-based platform for providing an array of assessment accommodations to students with special assessment needs. For more information and to review a memorandum, visit: [http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_assessment/necap.html#nimble](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_assessment/necap.html#nimble). Contact: Michael Hock, Assessment Director, at (802) 828-3115 or [michael.hock@state.vt.us](mailto:michael.hock@state.vt.us).

**Guide for Implementing Prekindergarten Education** – The Guide for Implementing Pre-kindergarten Education in Accordance with Act 62 is an *updated* version of the June 2008 Guide. It includes responses to frequently asked questions, clarification of prekindergarten policies, and an appendix of templates, sample contracts, notifications and reporting forms. For more information, visit [http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_earlyed/prekindergarten.html#guide](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_earlyed/prekindergarten.html#guide). Contact: Manuela Fonseca, (802) 828-3850 or [manuela.fonseca@state.vt.us](mailto:manuela.fonseca@state.vt.us).

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**For information on Department of Education sponsored events beginning April 2009**, visit: <http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/calendar.html>. The calendar is updated regularly.

**For more information on the Vermont State Board of Education**, visit: <http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/mainboard.html>.

**To view approved minutes of SBE meetings:** <http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#approved>

**To view State Board of Education's Monthly Reports:**  
[http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#monthly\\_reports](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#monthly_reports)

**2009 State Board of Education Meeting Dates:** April 14; May 19; June 16

